

NORTHERN KANE
Educational Corp.

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

NORTHERN KANE Educational Corp.

CAMBRIDGE LAKES CHARTER SCHOOL

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Discover Cambridge Lakes Charter School

Cambridge Lakes Charter School (CLCS) offers a personalized, hands-on education for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. From play-based early learning to interdisciplinary, experiential instruction, CLCS nurtures creativity, communication, and curiosity. With small class sizes and a focus on communication arts and STEAM, students receive the individual support they need to thrive academically and socially.

CAMBRIDGE LAKES PRESCHOOL

cambridge lakes preschool

Explore Cambridge Lakes Preschool

At Cambridge Lakes Preschool, young learners thrive in a nurturing environment that encourages exploration, creativity, and growth. With a play-based curriculum guided by the HighScope philosophy and Core Knowledge Sequence, children build a strong foundation for future success—socially, emotionally, and academically—all within a vibrant campus community.

SCHOOL'S OUT

School's Out! SUMMER FUN

Where Learning Meets Fun After the Bell

School's Out offers a fun, safe, and enriching environment with activities designed to spark creativity, build confidence, and foster friendships. From art and sports to themed events like Pajama Jams and tween-focused programs, students explore interests and discover new passions—all while enjoying a supportive and lively community.

cambridgelakescharterschool.net
(847) 648-9700
840 Campus Drive
Pingree Grove, IL 60140

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

See below what makes Cambridge Lakes Charter School (CLCS) unique from a traditional public school.

Traditional Public School		Charter School
		***Publicly Funded***
Governance		
Operated by a local school district and governed by a school board.		Operated by an independent organization under a charter agreement approved by ISBE and CUSD 300.
Funding Sources		
Funded through a combination of taxes. Per-pupil expenditures include allocations for Operations, the Education Fund (Ed Fund), and Debt Service.		Funded with public tax dollars via CUSD 300, disbursed at a one-year arrears rate. Charter schools receive funding only from the Ed Fund.
Budget		
FY23 = $15,865 per pupil		FY23 = $10,705 per pupil CLCS operates at just 68% of the per-student level compared to the average school in CUSD 300.
Accountability		
Required to comply with ISBE policies and district regulations.		Held accountable through a charter contract and ISBE policies, which mandate the achievement of specific academic and operational benchmarks outlined in the accountability plan.

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

(continued)

Traditional Public School		Charter School
		Publicly Funded
Curriculum and Standards		
Must adhere to state-mandated curriculum and academic standards.		Granted flexibility to develop its curriculum, while still required to meet state academic standards and participate in mandated assessments.
Student Enrollment		
Enrollment is generally determined by geographic boundaries.		Open enrollment for all students; a lottery system is used if applications exceed available capacity.
Facilities		
Typically housed in district-owned buildings.		Northern Kane Educational Corp. (NKEC) owns and operates a 15-acre campus in Pingree Grove, IL.
Employment Compensation		
Teachers are generally represented by a union, with salaries negotiated through collective bargaining.		Salaries are individually negotiated and based on skill level, with opportunities for merit-based pay increases.

BUILDING THE FUTURE: NKEC'S INVESTMENTS IN OUR CAMPUS, LEARNING, AND TEACHING

At Northern Kane Educational Corp. (NKEC), we are committed to investing in both people and place, ensuring that our educators have the tools they need, our students have access to innovative learning experiences, and our facilities meet the evolving needs of our school community.

NKEC broke ground on the Cambridge Lakes Learning Center (CLLC) in 2006. Over the course of the last 19 years, we have seen CLLC expand to a 15-acre campus. As we are nearing our twenty-year anniversary, NKEC is investing in our infrastructure, facilities, classrooms, and operations to create a sustainable campus for the next twenty years. This summer, you will see the beginning phases of our capital improvements begin to take place.

We know that great teachers are the foundation of a great school. Over the course of the last five years, we have increased our commitment to our employees through increased wages and benefits. In 2022, NKEC allocated 53% of its budget toward employee wages. In 2025, NKEC invested 65% of its budget in employee wages. This has been accomplished through streamlining our operations and focusing on what positively impacts student success. NKEC was able to make these improvements even though we are funded at 32% less than a typical D300 school is allocated for their budget.

As we look ahead to the 2025–2026 academic year, we are proud to showcase the improvements that we have accomplished over the course of the last two years. This reflects our deep commitment to supporting, growing, and nurturing our students. Please read through our annual report to find out more about how we are investing in your child's future.



INVESTING IN EDUCATORS

Here are a few of the key improvements and benefits included in our updated faculty agreement:



Starting September 2024

Expanded Support and Stability

Free Health: Individual Health Insurance
NKEC provided **employer-paid health and life insurance**, maintaining essential support for our staff.

Defined Benefit Rolled into Salaries
Since 2007, employees were given a defined benefit amount to put towards insurance, retirement, or their salary. In 2025, that defined benefit was **rolled into the teachers' salaries, and NKEC provided employer-paid benefits.**

Increased Salaries and Bonus
Employees were provided with a 5.5% compensation increase based on their salaries, plus their defined benefits. The net effect was an **average increase of 20%** in their compensation packages from the previous year.

Stronger Professional Development

Increased Support
All teachers participate in coaching cycles and ongoing development, ensuring high-impact instruction for students and meaningful growth for staff.

Ongoing Development
Continued investment in funded learning opportunities (e.g., conferences, training, and workshops) reflects our belief in lifelong learning for both students and educators.

Starting September 2024

Improved Leave and Retirement Benefits

Teacher Retirement System (TRS)
Prior to 2024, CLCS teachers were not eligible to join the teacher pension system. As of September 2024, all certified teachers became members of the TRS.

NKEC Retirement Contribution
NKEC pays 3.25% of a teacher's annual income into TRS as our retirement contribution.

INVESTING IN EDUCATORS

(continued)



Teachers' Benefit

Sick leave now rolls over year by year, allowing teachers to build up retirement credit and take the time they need to care for themselves or loved ones.

Starting July 2025

Clear and More Aligned Work Year

School Year Alignment

We've adjusted the official contract calendar to better align with the school's operational and planning schedule.

- For the past 18 years, teachers completed their contractual work year in August.
- Teachers now begin their work year in August, ensuring smoother onboarding, stronger classroom preparation, and a unified start for the school community.

At NKEC, these improvements are not just about policy; they're about people. Our educators are trusted with the most valuable thing on earth, our children. We're proud to support them with contracts that reflect their value.

Together, we are building a strong future — one teacher, one classroom, one student at a time.



INVESTING IN LEARNING



Innovative and Measurable Learning

2024-2025

- **Literacy**: Enhanced current curriculum with Science of Reading strategies and small group instruction.
- **Math**: Enhanced current curriculum with small group instruction and math fluency centers.
- **Spanish**: Enhanced language learning with hands-on outdoor education pilot.
- **CHAMPS**: Implemented universal behavior expectations to promote positive behavior schoolwide.
- **Universal Screener**: Implemented the iReady diagnostic assessment in Reading and Math for all students, K-8.
- **Personalized Learning Pathway**: Implemented the iReady personalized pathway in Reading and Math.
- **Interventions**: Designed and implemented a Tier 2 intervention program in Reading and Math for Upper School.

2025-2026

- Play-based learning for grades K-2
- Experiential learning for grades 3-4
- Outdoor education for grades 5-8
- Recess for ALL: grades K-8









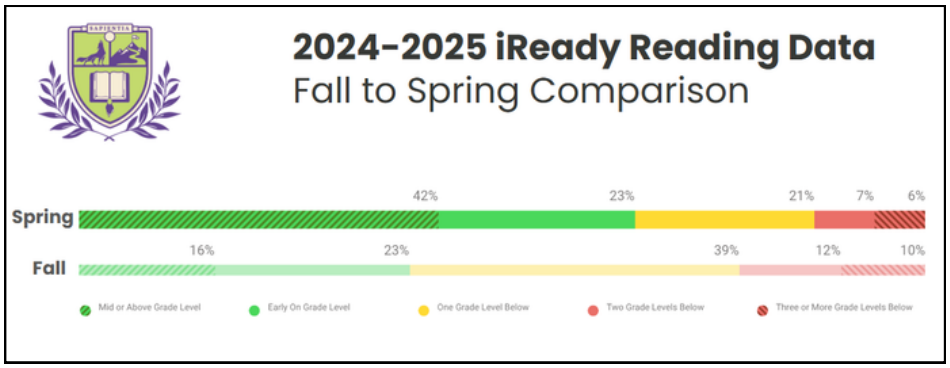
INVESTING IN LEARNING
(continued)



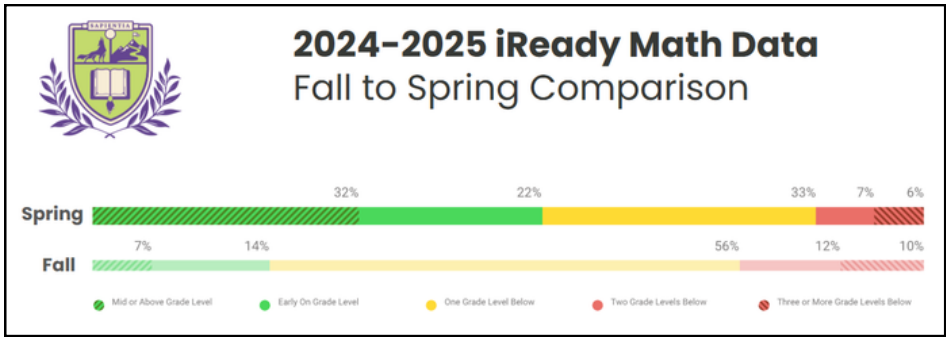
2024-2025 iReady Data

Significant progress was made in Reading and Mathematics

Reading:
Students at or above grade level nearly **doubled from 39% to 65%**



Math:
Students at or above grade level more than **doubled from 21% to 54%**





INVESTING IN OUR CAMPUS





Technology Enhancements

2024

- Technology upgrades and teacher laptops provided to support digital instruction.
- New student Chromebooks distributed to support 1:1 learning.

Capital Improvements and Facility Enhancements

2024

- Lockers installed for Upper School students.
- Repaved parking lots and walkways.
- Multipurpose court (pickleball/volleyball).
- New staff breakroom and renovated workroom.

2025

- New secured entrance and Main Office.
- Traffic flow improvements via parking lot redesign.
- All-new HVAC system installation to replace a failing system.
- Transition to LED lighting across campus to decrease costs.
- Renovated student bathrooms.
- New, student-designed playgrounds for all ages.
- Renovated, teacher-designed Science Labs and a new Communication Arts Lab.
- Updated food service areas for improved student experience.



INVESTING IN OUR CAMPUS

(continued)



Capital Improvements and Facility Enhancements

2026

- Enhanced building security.
- Lower School cubbies for storage for Summer 2026.
- New age-appropriate classroom furniture for the Lower School for 2026–2027.

2027-2030

- New roof.
- Campus-wide flooring upgrades.

These updates reflect our belief that creating excellent learning environments requires sustained commitment to both the academic and physical experiences of students and staff.

We're excited for what lies ahead and grateful to our community for your continued support as we grow.







UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

All NKEC Board Meetings are held at 7 PM on the Cambridge Lakes Learning Center Campus in the Green Kiva.

- *August 18, 2025*
- *September 15, 2025*
- *October 20, 2025*
- *November 17, 2025*
- *December 15, 2025*
- *January 12, 2026*
- *February 9, 2026*
- *March 16, 2026*
- *April 20, 2026*
- *May 18, 2026*
- *June 15, 2026*

CONTACT INFORMATION

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE!

Private School Feel. Public School Price. Free Public School of Choice for D300 Families.

- ***Phone:*** *(847) 648 - 9700*
- ***Email:*** *info@cambridgelakescharterschool.org*

Learn More

SCHEDULE A TOUR TODAY!

Give your child a head start on their educational journey at Cambridge Lakes Preschool.

- ***Phone:*** *(847) 648 - 9700 ext. 1001*
- ***Email:*** *dpederson@clcsstaff.org*

Learn More

REGISTER FOR FUN ALL YEAR LONG!

- ***Phone:*** *(847) 648-9700 option #6*
- ***Email:*** *lfranckowiak@nkeccorp.org*

Learn More